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VACAVALLEY RADIO CLUB

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VACAVILLE, CALFORNIA

July 2013

The Feedline

To me, it seems a waste of my time in writing about my adventures in amateur radio because aside from just a few other club members I know, no other club member who is just venturing into the world of amateur radio ever says anything about their on-the-air experiences be it in an email from them to me or writing about their experiences in this monthly newsletter. And I find this trend on the same level as compared to the club's radio repeaters in that nothing is divulged to anyone aside from the usual morning or afternoon commute rush hour radio traffic. And throw in the meager weekly net meeting check-ins and one gets the impression that no one exists in the club or on the air.

Of the written surveys done in the past, one would think there would be more activity or involvement from the club members. But there isn't and it's very disappointing to say this much less see this fleshed out each month and at each club meeting. The survey was done in the hope to bring new life to this radio club, but with members not wanting to change for the better or to "spice up" the weekly net meetings for better than usual club member check-ins

This is one stagnant radio club, folks! Believe it!!! This club has members who have vast amounts of knowledge, yet when I've made a general call in soliciting any member who is willing to make a amateur radio related meeting presentation, no one is willing to step up to the plate for the good of the club aside from myself and a couple of other members. I joined another radio club because after attending one of their meetings, I liked what I found and maybe someday I can involve myself a bit more that I do presently.

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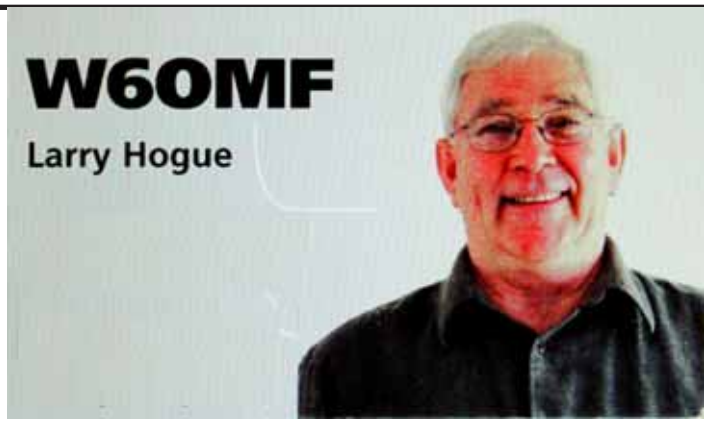


To All Members:

It has been 1 year since the passing of our friend, club member and fellow radio operator, Larry Hogue - W6OMF

For those who knew him and for those who barely knew him, he is and continues to be missed very much.

Without his help and guidance in how to operate my HF rig, I wouldn't be having as fun as I am these days!

And I wasn't able to thank him for his insight for how propagation works in the daytime vs. the nighttime……..

But he is around us everywhere we are and especially so when we're on the air trying for that elusive DX QSO!

Let us all remember him and for the knowledge he had acquired for which he gladly and freely gave out.

Larry Hogue, W6OMF sk

Submitted by Marcus KI6WDX

Feedline-from pg-1..Cont

Well, that's all I have to say other than to say that I QSO'd with two hams in New Mexico and New Hampshire last week using my FT-450 HF rig, my LDG YT-450 tuner and my dirt cheap G5RV wire dipole antenna with 100 watts to each ham. The ham in New Mexico was using the same HF rig that I have except it being the current model type along with a homemade antenna, which I tried to understand. The other ham out in New Hampshire was a club special event to commemorate the anniversary of Alan Sheppard who took the first step into space upon exiting his spacecraft some 52 years ago. But unless any one of you club members are actually on the air either with a base or mobile radio (and no, HT's don't count because their power output sucks), then you'd be making quite a bit of QSO's like I continue to acquire. I now have 19 states out of 50 states total QSO's since March of this year. And you?

The Vine Street firehouse ramp is not likely to be rebuilt anytime soon unless club members have a wad of excess cash that they are willing to part with and give to the VVFPD. That ramp is not a high priority since keeping the fire stations controlled by the VVFPD is a much higher priority. The VVFPD allows this radio club to use the meeting room above their main station on Vine Street and at the Elmira firehouse. If VVFDD chooses to kick this club off of their property, then what should we do? Meet at a member's home? Meet at restaurant? Who will help to insure that?

Be well and involve yourself in amateur radio!
73
Marcus K. Maclean, KI6WDX
President

The Vaca Valley Radio Club will meet Thursday July 11 at the Elmira Firehouse. Board meeding at 7:00 pm and membership at 7:30 pm.

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB--2013

ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Marcus K. Maclean, KI6WDX
Vice President: Chris Jones, KD7TQO
Secretary: Skip Lawson, AF6HC
Treasurer: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Director: Skip Lawson, AF6HC
Director: Antonio Del Rio, N6GZB
Director: Arthur Miller, KI6UXE
Director: Richard Craig, KJ6MIB

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Net Control Chairperson: Chris Jones, KD7TQO
Club Activities Chairperson: Board of Directors
Newsletter Editor: Jerry Bowen, KJ6SCC
Newsletter Publisher & Distributor: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

Oldies But Goodies vs My Yeasu FT-897

Jerry Bowen

I was talking to one of our club members while we were at the mini-field day that Jerry, KD6WKY put on. As usual I started talking about the old "boat anchors" that I treasure.

I was a little surprised when I started mentioning different brands of receivers and transmitters to one of the gand, such as Hallicrafters, Collins, Hammerlund, National, Knight etc, that he had never heard of those brands or maybe heard of them but didn't know anything about them.

Well, there I go again with the good old generation gap!

So, since I didn't have much to fill this newsletter with this month, I decided to write a little about some of the old boat anchors and why there are many reasons to appreciate and like about them and some of the things I like and dislike about my modern gear.

Let's start with my modern Yeasu 897 transceiver. There is no doubt it has more excellent bells and whistles than all my boat anchors put together.

First of all, there are about 97 different "things" you can activate with just a few push buttons, knobs and switches that you can barely see in this very small, compact package.

This is what I see with the regular lighting in my shack other than when I use a flashlight to see the panel controls.

I finally had to laminate a scan of the front of the Yeasu so I had a vague idea of what each control is and where it is and post it near the rig. I also keep a 3-ring note book with the explanations of what these controls are for. But….as usual I still get confused.

Now let's take a look at a couple of my boat anchors.

Notice how nice and colorful this Hammerlund HQ-180-A receiver is. Also, notice this 40pound beauty was built in the 1960s, and has lettering you can read without a flashlight. This triple conversion receiver has 19 tubes,

some of the tube filaments are kept lit up even when the receiver is shut down to eliminate much of the drift associated with initially energizing tube equipment. Its sensitivity is close to as good as the Yeasu and with just a few easily understood controls to manipulate makes this a nice receiver to use. No, it doesn't have all the great functions that the modern rigs have but I like it more for daily listening.

Here's an older model Yeasu FT-101EE. It is larger, more colorful and reasonable to operate. I use it more than my FT897. It was about three times the size of the FT-897, was built in the 1970s and is simple to operate and read the dial descriptions..

Yeasu also made a nice 2 meter transceiver, the FT221, which I am just getting used to, that I bought at the Sonoma Hamfest. It's bigger and uses dials instead of digital readout, which makes it a little harder to use. But its sound quality is good and puts out a reasonable 14

watts.

The National NX-3 Tranceiver is only useable on the 80, 40 & 20 meter bands. Its grey panel and lettering is easy to read and tuning it up is simple. It's also necesary to warm it up for at least a half hour before operating because of drift. I only use it occasionally whenever I feel the nessecity of operationg in the old ways. It was built in the 1960s.

I have several models of the Hallicrafters receivers so I'll just use one as an illustration of a great looking rig. The S-76 was built in the 1940s and 50s and had a

separate speaker. SSB was still in its infancy so to listen to that mode you had to use the BFO, which can be a challenge especially when the receiver is drifting.

One note of caution, if you are a Hallicrafters collector, note that the model S-38 receiver is an AC-DC chassis which is hot and you can receive severe shocks if you touch the chassis and something grounded. That's why they are so cheap.

Well, that's it....I love my oldies and I realize they can't compare with the modern rigs; but they are sure a lot easier to use!

THE VVRC WELCOMES YOU

The Vaca Valley Radio Club has proudly served the Northern Solano County Area since 1988. We pride ourselves in providing a friendly place for radio amateurs to meet and improve their operating skills.

Browse our website for more information about our club. If you have any questions please e-mail us at w6vvr@w6vvr.net or call 707-448-5665 for assistance

The Repeater is Published by the Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143, An ARRL Affiliated Club. Founded 1987, Chartered 1988. General Meetings: 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM at the Elmira Fire Station.

Wheelchair accessible

Visit the Repeater online courtesy of Bob K6HEW at: vacavalleyradio.net

Club repeater in Vacaville:W6VVR 145.470 MHz(-) pl 127.3 The W6VVR net call is Tuesday evenings at 8pm on the club repeater. All are invited to participate in this weekly meeting on the air. 73!

Additional local repeaters
WV6F 224.200(-)
WV6F 440.025(+)
WV6F 1291.900(-)

Vaca Valley Radio Club Field Day

Jerry Bowen-KJ6SCC

We had planned to hold the club Field Day at the Nut Tree Airport but due to severe health problems of key planning members of the Vaca Valley Radio Club (VVRC) the event wasn't held there.

Enter Jerry Oliver, KD6WKY, a long-standing member of the club. Jerry decided to set up a smaller version of Field Day in the park behind Vacaville City Hall. He sent out an e-mail to all members inviting those who

L to R--Marcus MacLean-KI6WDX, Skip Lawson-AF6HC, Jerry Bowen-KJ6SCC, Jerry Olive-KD6WKY

were interested to participate.

When I arrived he was in the process of setting up his own equipment under the shade of the Redwood trees. As he was doing so, he patiently answered all my questions about his Buddy Pole antenna. The equipment was set up on a table and his 1,000 watt generator about 100 feet away.

He went on the air and soon began making contacts mostly in the Western States. Before long Skip, AF6HC, Marcus, KI6WDX and a little later Bruce Mccaskie, N6THN showed up and joined in with the operation.

I began taking photos of the gang while they were busy, but when I got home I found that I had the AutoFocus turned off so all the pics were fuzzy. Bruce sent me an e-mail offering copies of his photos . What you see here is his excellent work. Thank you Bruce.

NET CONTROL OPERATORS

1st week of month-Jerry Bowen; KJ6SCC
2nd week of month-Richard Craig; KJ6MIB
3rd week of month-Chris Jones; KD7TQO
4th week of month-Marcus MacLean; KI6WDX
On months with 5 weeks-Bob Hewitt; K6HEW

It was hot but the shade made the day very enjoyable. Thanks Jerry for your willingness to be an active participant in club activities as usual.

Thanks to Bruce Mccaskie N6THN we have photos of the event

Jerry Olive-KD6WDK began immediately to make contacts

Skip Lawson, AF6HC works the controls as Marcus MacLean-KI6WDX watches the operation

Radio WLW Brochure

How big is BIG

By Matt Erickson
KK5DR

Many hams have seen "big" RF amplifiers. I have seen some really big amps, read about many more. Broadcast stations have some of the biggest amps ever built. The story I'm going to tell you is true and was perhaps the biggest final amp ever.

I read an article about a VLF (Very Low Frequency) station built in the late 1920's. The station operated on or about 75KHz. It had an "estimated" power output of about 500kW. The antenna was over 50 miles long, suspended at about 90 ft.

This station is not really impressive today, but remember it was built in the 1920's it was one of the most powerful stations on earth back then.

Now days, the US Navy has VLF stations that operate in the multi-mega-watt range. These stations are used today to send coded messages to US submarines while they are submerged.

What made the 1920's VLF station interesting was its shear physical size. The final amplifier "tank" coils were over 3 stories tall, made from 3" diameter copper water pipe. The tuning capacitors were made from large plates of copper, which had spacing as much as 6" apart. The HV power supply was in the 50kV range, rated at several amps of plate current. The unit was run in the class-C mode. The final tube was truly impressive, standing over 6 ft. tall and 8 ft. in diameter. It was not a glass envelope, but a metal external anode. Back then tubes were rather unreliable and had typically short emission life spans. So, instead of changing the tube every few months, the tube was rebuilt on site.

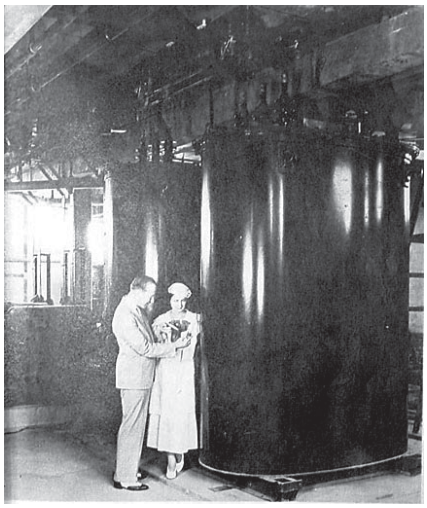
This is how the tube was rebuilt: there was a "manhole" cover bolted to one side of the tube, large enough for a man to actually crawl inside the tube. Every few months the transmitter was shutdown, the vacuum which was maintained on the tube by a continuously operated vacuum pump, was then shut off and the tube was filled with atmosphere, the manhole cover then removed. Next, a man would crawl inside and inspect the cathode & gird elements, the filament was a directly heated Thoriated tungsten type, just like a 3-500Z, only much, much larger. The filament wires were roughly 1/2" in diameter carrying about 250 amps of current at about 1.5Vac. If the filaments were OK and within size specs, the tube interior was cleaned with a special solvent of which the EPA and OSHA would not allow to be used today. After the tube interior was cleaned, the filament was "re-carbonized". Carbon is the emissive material of most Thoriated tungsten filaments. The way that the filament was "re-carbonized" was that a man would enter the tube with an acetylene torch, but no oxygen was used in the torch flame, so it produces a great amount of thick carbon sooty smoke, which the man would apply directly to the filament wires. Again the tube interior was cleaned with solvent, but care was taken not to touch the filaments with it.

After the final cleaning the solvent residue was allowed to evaporate, and the manhole cover was re-sealed and bolted up. Now, the vacuum pump was turned back on, and the tube evacuated for a few hours before the tube was again ready for operation.

The tube anode was cooled by distilled water pumped into a water jacket around it. The then "heated" water would be pumped to a "cooling tower" outside the final PA "building", then back into the tube jacket.

Another item about the HV power supply, is that the filter capacitor was about the size of a modern day tractor trailer rig. Filled with hundreds of gallons of oil no less. The plate transformer was several tons of iron and copper.

In the article, it was noted that large "corona" was seen on the tank coils and around the antenna ends on days when the humidity was above 50%, accompanied by an audible buzz that was synchronous with the keyed CW signals being sent at that time.


Modulation Transformers

I hope you have enjoyed learning about a very, very BIG amplifier.

Submitted by Skip, AF6HC

You just might be a a Redneck Ham Radio Operator if...

1. One leg of your dipole is tied to the outhouse.
2. Needle nose pliers are needed to turn your transceiver on and off.
3. You paid more for your mobile antenna than you did for your wife's wedding ring.
4. You paused for ID every ten minutes while on your honeymoon.
5. Your spouse says, "Honey, do you love me?" And your response is "QSL, ROGER THAT!"
6. Your trailer home is part of your antenna.
7. Your mobile radio costs more than the vehicle it's mounted in.
8. Your power supply consists of jumper cables hanging out the window of your shack attached to the battery of your truck.
9. Your HF rig is the latest ICOM or KENWOOD and your Desk Mic came from Radio Shack.
10. Your idea of RF is REAL FINE audio.
11. Your homebrew amplifier resembles a moonshine whiskey still in Alabama .
12. Your TV antenna and 10 Meter Beam are one in the same.
13. You own a linear amplifier but not a lawn mower.

Former VVR Club member honored by the Vacaville Rotary Club

From the VV Reporter by Catherine Bowen

Vacaville's noon Rotary Club has an interesting way of honoring its presidents as their terms end. Called a "demotion," the celebration of their service to the club is marked with some funny humiliation and a two-block "parade" that usually features the outgoing president doing something stupid, crazy or both on Main Street. This year's victim was **Mike Vieira, a former CHP motorcycle cop** who was given a special police escort down Main Street on Thursday with Vacaville Police officer James Smith. Vieira, was back on two wheels for the event, riding a scooter complete with safety helmet, of course.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

VACAVALLEY RADIO CLUB, INC.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Please Print & Fill in Completely — Dues are delinquent January 1st

Name: _____ Call Sign_____

Street: _____

City: _____Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) _____-_____OK to Publish ?(_____)

License Class: _____ ARRL Member ?(_____)

E-Mail Address_____

FAMILY Member (Spouse or Children)

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)

MEMBER Dues $15.00
Each Family Member $ 2.00
Student $ 5.00
Repeater/Autopatch donation
Call/Name badge $11.00

Optional ARRL membership
ARRL dues $39.00
Total

Paid by CASH: Check #

DATE:

Mail to : Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143